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ABSTRACT

In its examination of the place of didactics in Scandinavian curricula, this paper discusses didactics as theory and prescription, at different levels of abstraction, and as scientific discipline. It focuses on the process of curriculum planning and selection in two areas: (1) preparing curriculum programs for teaching and learning nationally and locally, and (2) as an integral part of the individual teacher's planning. After presenting a brief historical background, the paper describes the scope and general development of the inherent meaning of the term "didactics." It presents three models of didactical analysis (Danish, German, and Norwegian), all of which represent the general Scandinavian view. After discussing didactical analysis at different societal levels, the paper examines didactical analysis as curricular meta-analysis which links didactical analysis to the professional development of teachers and the teaching-learning milieu as well as to the role of teachers in building theories of didactics. (SM)

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The Place of Didactics in Curriculum in Scandinavia

ED349259

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Introduction

The focus of my paper as of the other papers in this symposium is the place of didactics in curriculum. We have, the way I see it, three key concepts: didactics, curriculum and place. As an approach to my discussion I have seen it relevant to specify my interpretation of these concepts in this particular context.

I will begin by the concept of didactics.
I have in earlier work and in recent articles (Gundem 1991,1992a,1992b) approached the phenomenon of didactics as an existing entity associated with different institutions and educational setting in the Nordic countries by identifying and elucidating the term "didactics" :

- as theory and as prescription (and consequently as reflection and action) underlining the different schools of didactics with their different foci and views as to scope and function
- at different levels of abstraction like "general didactics" "special didactics", and "school subject didactics"
- as scientific discipline, research area and courses of study, that is the institutionalized aspect

According to my view didactics in the context of our symposium first and foremost concerns the theory and prescription part in its applied version as reflection, deliberation and action in pedagogical planning. A consequence of this is that an awareness of the theory - model aspect in didactics focussing on the didactical analysis and the so-called "categories of didactics" will be a key to our understanding. The context may, however, be at different

levels of abstraction depending if we are concerned with "general didactics", "special didactics", or "school subject didactics".

What is meant by curriculum varies across contexts. There are different realities of curriculum, and different understandings. A very common distinction is often made between the German-Scandinavian notion of curriculum as intentions laid down in a document in the form of curriculum guidelines, and the more broad and inclusive Anglo-American notion of the intended, operationalized, enacted, and attained curriculum.

In my exposition I will stay within the German-Scandinavian reality focussing on the process of curriculum planning and selection in preparing curriculum programs for teaching and learning nationally and locally, and as an integral part of the planning work of the individual teacher.

As to the concept of "place" it is rather simple. I take it to denote the function didactical analysis is given, as in the Norwgian case, by national curriculum authorities as an explicit means of the national education steering system, and the role it plays in the planning of lessons by the individual teacher. I may, however, also allude to the role didactical analysis is given as macro-analysis concerning the society - school relation and as meta - analysis concerning teacher professionalization.

One note of warning. Even if my frame of reference is the situation in the Nordic countries, my outlook is Norwegian and my lenses coloured by my personal and national perspectives.

A Remark as to History

General didactics as theory of instruction became very early one of the main courses of study especially in primary school teacher training. The main emphasis was on lesson preparation and on inducing the teachers with a sense of respect regarding the common cultural and Christian heritage, and to develop a strong and lasting sense of responsiblity as to the transmitting of this heritage. General didactics as theory of instruction did accordingly not only serve to legitimate the nationally issued curriculum guidelines. It was the only realistic means to bridge the gap between nationally and locally formulated guidelines and what happened in classroom instruction.

The term didactics itself was used rather unreflectively making no clearcut distinction between curriculum and instruction as the inherent content of general didactics. The syllabus of didactics in teacher education was, however, very restricted and as indicated, the instructional aspects dominated. A rather typical course book from this early period of didactics is Ernst Kaper's from 1911 Den daglige undervisnings form Kortfattet didaktik ud fra praksis (The Format of Everyday Teaching. Brief Didactics Based on Practice) . As late as the beginning of the 1970s this unreflective use still persisted in all teacher training institutions in Norway (cp. Gundem 1980,p.19).

A Background Note on Scope and General Development of the Inherent Meaning of the Term Didactics

In order to grasp the foci, categories and elements of the didactical analyses of different schools of didactics, it is necessary to understand the inherent meaning attributed to the term didactics within those different schools since the 1960s.

Of course the focus and content of general didactics have been a matter of dispute and change according to the educational winds blowing, and so has the meaning attributed to the term itself.

The stronghold of "geisteswissenschaftliche Didaktik" was Denmark and its bastion was the Royal Danish School of Education promoting a narrow conception of didactics leaving the methodological aspects aside. The technological and behaviorial science impact that dominated the didactic problem area in Sweden, Finland and in, to a certain degree, Norway from the 1950s - and there especially at the Institute for Educational Research, led to a widening up concerning the scope of didactics. The problem areas of methods and evaluation were included (this development never took the grip of Denmark in the same way even if it was noticeable, cp.Schnack 1991), and gradually adding to it the problem area of justification and legitimation regarding the didactical decision-making process and the social and sociatal contexts.

After 1968 , however, university milieus in Denmark became the proponents for critical didactics influencing especially certain university courses on didactics like the didactics of the social education option at Oslo University and that of Oppland Regional

College. One may say that two aspects dominated: the linking of didactics to politics and society and the emphasis on a problemoriented and participant based didactics (cp. Engelsen 1990; Schnack 1991). An interesting point of view is, however, raised by Karsten Schnack in his treatment of 1970s Danish didactics:

> ...one could say that also here the didactics disintegrated - became ideological criticism and proposal for work form. (Schnack, 1991, p.4)

The end of the 1970s and 1980s brought many changes as to the content and form of institutionalized didactics in Norway. In the Colleges of Education general didactics was strengthened as a consequence of the 1974 College of Education Curriculum Guidelines. At the Institute for Educational Research courses including "geisteswissenschaftliche Didaktik" replaced courses on instructional objectives and educational technology. The hermeneutical approach in educational research was reconsidered. The proponents of critical didactics shifted their focus to the notion of "didactical rationality" understood as "goal rationality" and stressing the rational relation between content and form in education (cp.Dale 1989, Engelsen,1990).

"Didactical rationality" is also in the latter sense, central to the Swedish debate on didactics (e.g.Wallin 1988a, 1988b) .

Summing up : We may discern between an unreflective conception of the term which may or may not imply methods as well as curricular matters, an explicit narrow conception including only

the aims and themes, eventually methodological consequences of aims and subject matter, a wide conception of the term including the aims, themes, methods, teaching aids, evaluation and preconconditions of teaching, and a still wider or expanded one including also the school- society relationship, often seen in a critical perspective (ideology- critique). One simplified way of expressing these distinctions is to say that the narrow conception includes the "Whats", the wider one the "Whats" and the "Hows" and the expanded conception the "Whats", "Hows" and the "Whys". What constitute the "didactical categories" consequently varies according to the prevailing conception.

How then does this general development and the conception of what constitutes didactics affect the nature of didactical analysis?

Let us look closer at three models of didactical analyses: a Danish model, a German one, and a rather recent Norwegian one; all representative for the general Scandinavian outlook.

Models of Didactical Analyses

The 1974 College of Education reform in Norway initiated a move away from an unreflective use of the term didactics towards a more reflective narrow use focussing on the aims and subject matter of education leaving the instructional problem area apart. This move, strongly influenced by the didactical climat of the Royal Danish School of Education , where from the 1960s this narrow conception of didactics prevailed (cp. Gundem 1980,pp.21-24; Schnack, 1991),

was part of an effort to break and replace the then prevailing tradition in Colleges of Education of a recipe-like instruction in teaching methods. The most typical comprehensive model in general didactics of this period was Carl Aage Larsen's model of the structure and elements of the instructional task. From the model it is apparent that the scope of didactics is limited to the aims of schooling and the objectives and content of school subjects, and the methods derived from these aims and objectives.

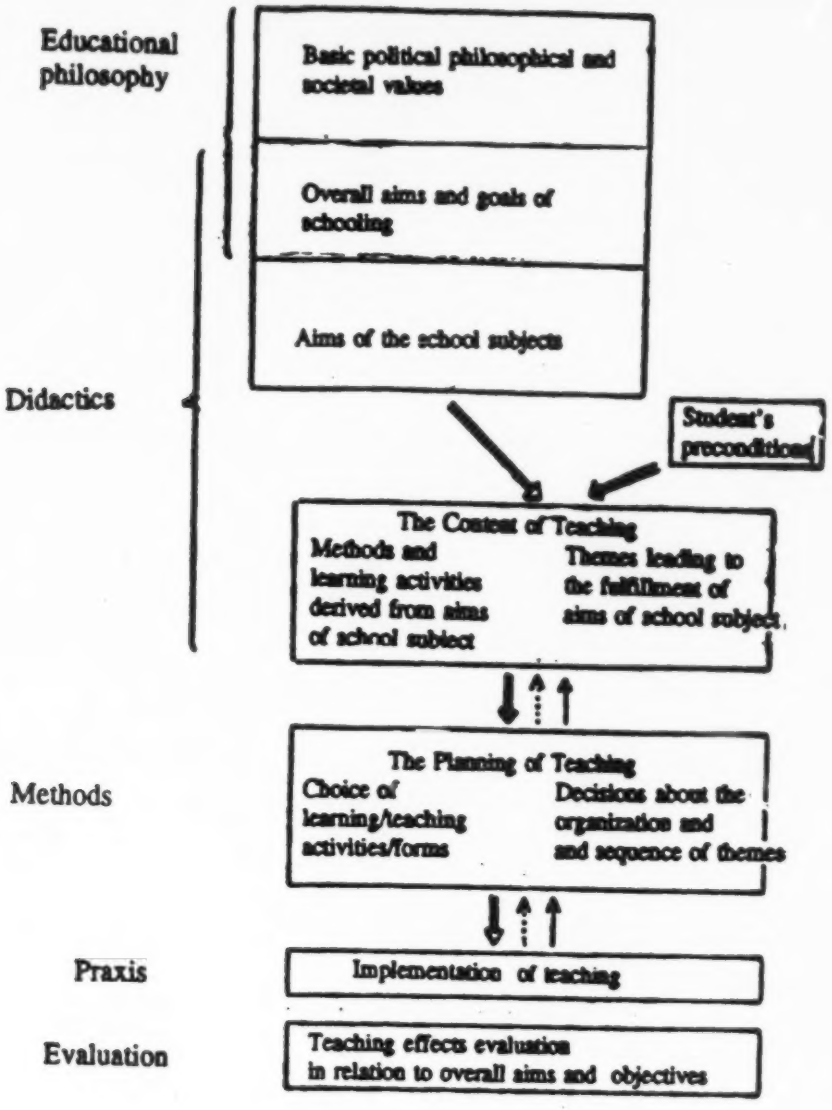
Educational philosophy
Basic political philosophical and societal values
Overall aims and goals of schooling
Aims of the school subjects
Didactics
Student's preconditions
The Content of Teaching
Methods and learning activities derived from aims of school subject
Themes leading to the fulfillment of aims of school subject
Methods
The Planning of Teaching
Choice of learning/teaching activities/forms
Decisions about the organization and and sequence of themes
Praxis
Implementation of teaching
Evaluation
Teaching effects evaluation in relation to overall aims and objectives

Figure 1. Carl Aage Larsen's model of the structure and elements of the instructional task (Didaktik Pædagogik og Fag, 5(1):25. (My translation).

This narrow conception of didactics, even if formally adopted and

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stated in teacher training, never became dominant in Norway. I will argue that an intervening determinant was the growing didactical milieu of the Institute for Educational Research at the University of Oslo being , as indicated, strongly influenced by the Anglo-American curriculum tradition. A notion of didactics as encompassing both the aims and content as well as the methodological aspects of teaching and learning was consequently firmly established since the mid 70s.[1]

And the analyses adopted in teacher education as part of the course in school subject didactics also included elements pertaining to pedagogy. In an early publication (Sveidahl, 1973) meant as an introduction to the field of school subject didactics, the scope is outlined in the form of a range of topics to be examined and reflected upon, ranging from the more overall and fundamental issues to questions related to practical teaching in the classroom like:

- the historical background of the basic discipline and the school subject in question,
- the changes undergone as to the content, structure and scope of the school subject,
- the comtemporary value of the school subject,
- the role of the school subject in the overall program of schooling,
- the nature and structure of the discipline related to the transformation process from scientific discipline to school subject: including phenomena like representation, selection and adaptation,

- issues concerned with instruction
- evaluation

This development of a widening up of the scope of didactical analysis was strengthened by what seemed to be a change in German didactics. The Schulz/Heimann model of didactical analyses was looked upon as a revitalization of didactical analysis and adapted in teacher training and used extensively in the graduate courses of didactics especially at the University of Oslo (Gundem 1980).

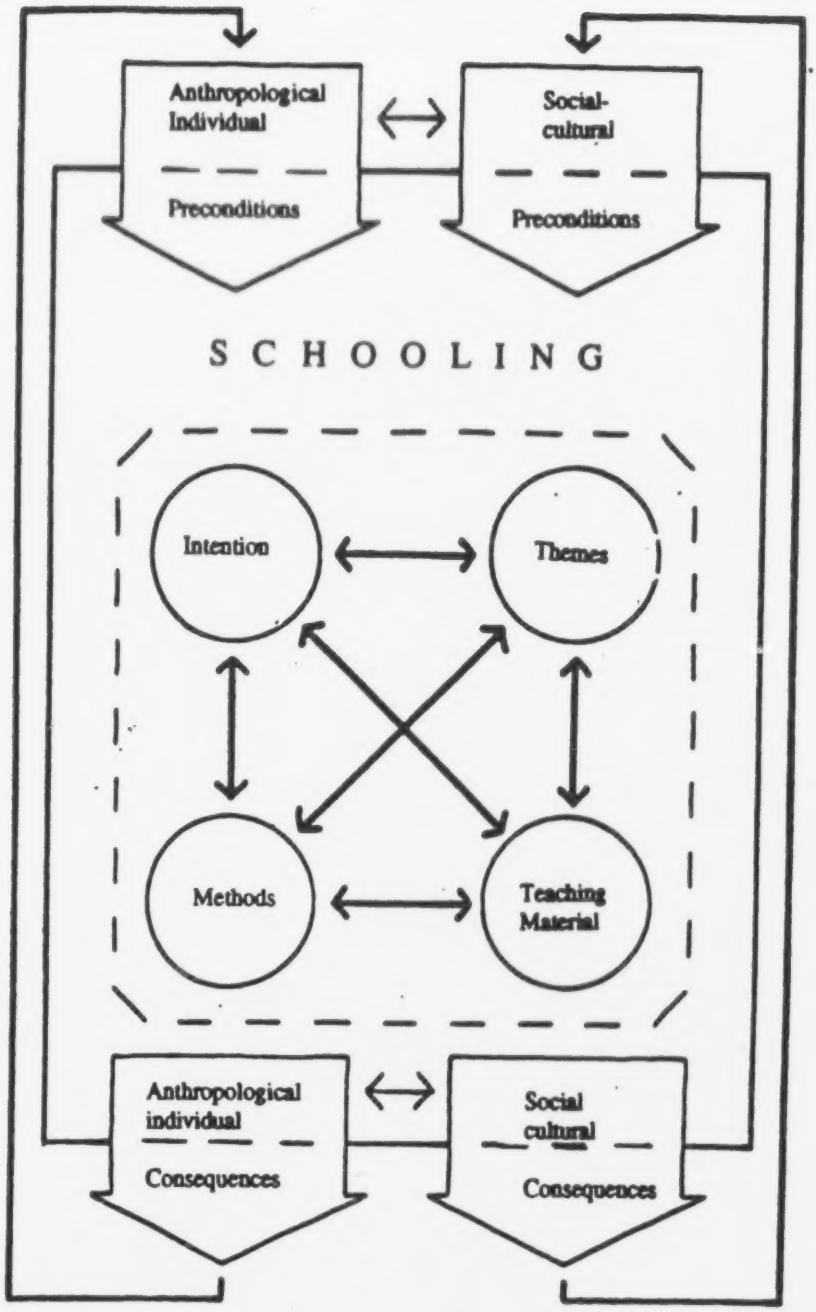

Figure 2. The didactical analysis in "lerntheoretische Didaktik ".
From Schulz, W.Aufgaben der Didaktik. In: Kochan, D.C. Allgemeine Didaktik, Fachdidaktik, Fachwissenschaft p.414. (My translation)

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It is not possible in this context to go into detail concerning the structure of the model or the philosophy underlying its rational, which is in fact very substantial. I will just make five points.

1. It is evident that the scope of didactical analysis compared to the first model shown is widened up including at the first level of reflection the "Entscheidungsfelder des Lehrers" what the teacher has to decide upon: Aims, Themes, Methods and Teaching Material.

2. The interrelatedness and interaction between these are maximized by arrows indicating that the didactical analysis may start with any of them breaking so to say the hegenomy of the aims-means model.

3. The antecedents or preconditions of teaching, the "Bedingungsfelder des Unterrichts", are part of the analysis at a second level of reflection , and the model also allow for an analysis of consequences.

4. The Heimann - Schulz model of didactical analysis represented when it appeared in the middle of the 1960s, an explicit critique of the prevailing tradition in German and Danish didactics (cp.Gundem 1980). A relevant question : In what ways - what is different? Two points are worth stressing:

The inherent didactical analysis is influenced by "geisteswissenschaftliche Didaktik" in an awareness of the complexity of everything related to the planning process of teaching and learning.

The place of theory is, however, different both as a means in teacher education and in didactical research. The learning/teaching didactic theory of Paul Heimann and Wolfgang Schulz, implied a theory-governed teacher behaviour and that theory based on objective didactical research would provide a base as well as become the foundation for curriculum reform.

It is in this respect important to grasp the dichotomy made between theory-based and experienced-based reflection. In the first one the teacher is emotionally neutral and distanced, as well as objective confronting the knowledge base for reflection. In the second one which is the subjective engagement of the teaching situation the teacher is personally involved and constructive in decision-making.

5. It is acknowledged that the "Bedingungsfelder des Unterrichts", that is the preconditions of teaching, are subject to an evaluation guided by a critique of societal and cultural norms, forms of pedagogy and relevant facts (ideologie critique - "didaktische Strukturfilter.").[2]

Inherent is a potential for a development of a critical didactical analysis influenced by the Frankfurter school of sociology. Both ideology critique and the formulation of "didactische Strukturfilter" became during the 1970s important as part of the didactical analysis. This was the case perhaps not so much in teacher preparation as in the preparation of state and local curricula like for instance formulated and performed by the Blankertz group at Münster in the beginning of the 1970s (e.g.Blankertz 1974). A development that may be seen as a further

development of the to start with, rather neutral and objective general scrutiny of influencing ideologies formulated by Heimann, but gradually radicalized by Schulz.

A German model yes, but it has proved influential in the formation of Scandinavian teachers and of the professional didacticians as part of the general syllabus in general didactics in teacher education and as part of the university graduate courses of study in education (cp. e.g Gundem 1991). And not less important, the underlying ideas and rationale have been among the most influencing forces of the development of the most used model of didactical analysis today in Norway: The model of didactic relational deliberation. [3]

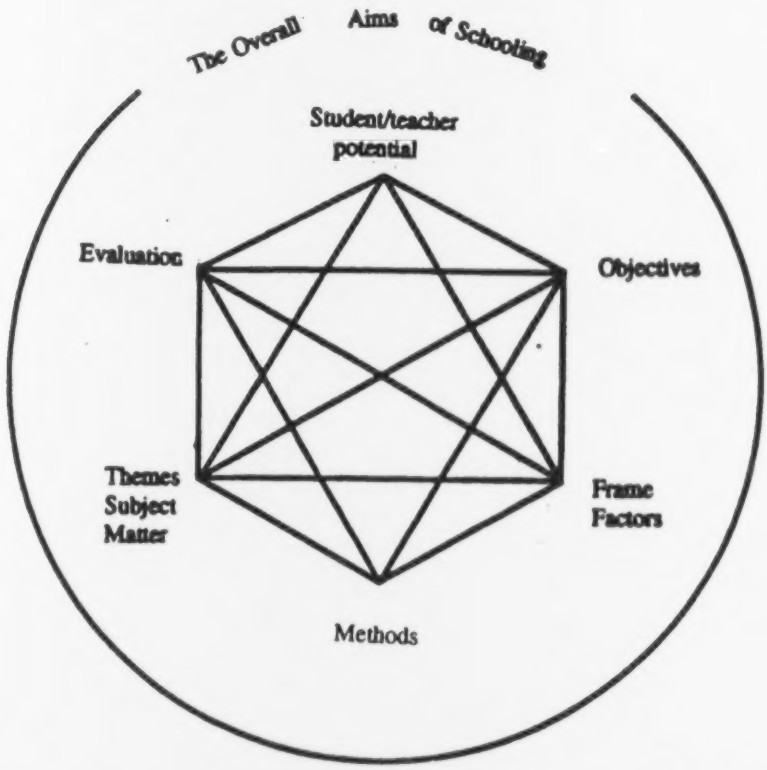

Figure 3:An interactive model for didactical analysis: The model of didactic relational deliberation. (Guidelines for the development of curricula for school subjects in upper secondary education, The National Council for Upper Secondary Education p.8). (My translation).

Certain points are worth underlining:

1. In relation to the Heimann/Schulz model it represents a further development combining the two levels of reflection into one level thus integrating all the categories of didactical analysis in one model.
2. It stresses the interplay of the didactic categories implied by instructional planning: pupil and teacher potential, subject matter, objectives, learning activities, learning media, frame factors (cp Lundgren 1972) and evaluation.
3. The model allows for professional planning of lessons by the individual teacher and in decentralized and local or school-based curriculum development by groups of teachers within the overall national framework of superordinate goals and the national curriculum guidelines.
4. The success of the model has been ascribed to the fact that it seemingly corresponds to the way teachers reason when planning lessons and courses for study. They very seldom start with objectives, but plan taking into consideration a series of interacting factors being mutually implied.
5. The impact of the model may be illustrated by the role given to it by the National Board for Primary and Junior High School as a basis for local curriculum development and in the 1989 Guidelines for the Development of Curricula for School Subjects in Upper Secondary Education by The National Council for Upper Secondary Education [4].

To supplement the traditional centralized system of curriculum development in senior high school, it has since 1981

been agreed upon a decentralized system of curriculum development also ensuring, however, a national curriculum. A group in Troms¢ may e.g. be endorsed with the task of developing a curriculum for biology, while a group in Bergen is preparing a curriculum for domestic science. The tradition had up till then been to appoint groups consisting of especially qualified subject teachers. In 1986 it was estimated that all together a hundred curriculum groups were in action.

In a situation like this the question of how to make a curriculum becomes imperative. Realizing that most of the groups would be comprised of subject teachers with no experience from curriculum work, it was agreed that the answer was to develop a set of guidelines prescribing how to go about the task of making a curriculum.Such a set of Guidelines was provided already in 1977, following a traditional aims-means curriculum development model. A preliminary revized version existed from 1984. In 1986 it was , however, decided to call upon expert advice, that is "curriculum professors", to cooperate with the curriculum authorities and representatives from Upper High School Teacher Training Institutions in developing such a set of Guidelines. A preliminary version has existed from 1987, and in January 1989 a final version materialized from this "expert" group advocating the model of didactic relational deliberation as the key element of the guidelines (cp. Gundem 1989).

One point not touched upon in the discussion of the models of didactics is the question of the place of didactical research in curriculum. Just one Swedish example will be given : the research perspectives of the didactics research group of Ference Marton at

Gothenburg. The reason why this work is chosen is because it is in my opinion the research in Scandinavia that most clearly relates didactical research to the didactical analyses as a basis for teacher education (cp.also Dahlgren 1990).

The research involved is concerned about bringing together the didactic categories of content and form, that is of subject matter and pedagogy or to use the common expressions the "whats" and the "hows" of teacher planning.

The students' subjective experiences of the teaching and learning situation according to their personal predispositions and background constitute the research point of departure focussing on the so-called phenomenographic interview by which the pupils' conceptions and understandings of the subject matter are sought elucidated. The research findings will eventually constitute a theory base guiding the selection of subject matter as well as that of preferred pedagogy (Kroksmark 1987, Kroksmark and Marton 1987)).

Didactical analysis at different levels

A criticism of the Martonian perspectives of didactics is that the school- society relationship is neglected or left out all together (cp. e.g. Lundgren 1986,1987) - a criticism also aimed at the American curriculum tradition.

There is in the conception of the didactical analysis in the Nordic countries from the 1960s a prevailing tradition of including the societal levels - that is the levels of legitimation and school politics - even if this may not be apparent in planning models.

An interesting development is provided by the recent publication (1991) by Gerd and Gerhard Arfwedson from the Stockholm School of Education, and formerly close colleagues and associates of Ulf Lundgren. The publication having the title Didactics for Teachers approaches the didactical field in a somehow different and more comprehensive way than the Marton group coming very close to the conception held by Norwegian didacticians.

Gerd and Gerhard Arfwedsson define the area of didactics as the whats, whys and hows of teaching seen not as separate problem areas, but wholistically, mapping out as it were the scope of didactical analysis and research:

> The didactical analysis deals with questions related to the content of schooling and the teaching of this content - and all past and prevailing determining and forming influences on the content as well as on the teaching, and consequently influencing the contexts of teachers and pupils.
>
> (Arfwedson & Arfwedson , 1991, p.27. My translation)

The Arfwedsons look upon the didactical analysis and decision making as belonging to three levels:

1. An ideological-normative level: school politics encompassing the decisons taken at national, regional and local levels.
2. A descriptive-analytical level represented by didactical research in its varying forms.
3. A concrete-pragmatic level encompassing teacher and pupil interests (Ibid., p.25).

Didactical analysis as curricular metaanalysis

There is also a tradition especially in recent Norwegian and Danish didactics to include metaanalysis as part of the didactical analysis.

In doing so didactical analysis is being linked to the professional development of teachers and the teaching-learning milieu as well as to the role of the teacher in the theory-building of didactics. One origin may be found in Erich Wenigers different levels of deliberation and in the "Bedingungsprüfung", the testing of preconditions, of the learning-theory orientated didactics or most probably in the philosophical base of "geisteswissenschftliche Pädagogik" (cp.Gundem 1980, 1992).

Lars Løvlie (1972) presents this in the form of a "practice triangle". Didactical reflection concerns practice conceived of as existing at three levels. The first level constitutes the teaching situation itself: the interactive teaching. The second level entails the pre- and postactivities connected with the teaching-situation, while the third level of practice being ethical in nature constitutes reflection and deliberation about the two "lower" levels of practice.

Erling Lars Dale (1989) uses the expression "didactical rationality" to denote the internal consistency that ought to exist between these levels. He stresses especially the necessity of a critique being involved at the third level of reflection and the need of deliberation and open discussion related to an analysis of legitimazation and selection procedures

at both national, local and instructional levels.

Concluding Remarks

I have in my paper just touched upon certain aspects of didactic theory as theory of instruction - putting so to say the wider and more philosophically based aspects aside. It is, however, important to note that didactic theories are legitimated by their relationship to philosophy, and their view of man and society as well as their relationship to theories of learning and teaching. This has consequences for the scope and foci of particular didactic theories, their specific categories and the nature of the didactic reflection as well as for the criteria chosen for the selection of the content of teaching and learning, all leading to variations in their subordinate curriculum theories and strategies for curriculum development. The line from theory to model and to prescription is to a certain degree self-evident within the different schools of didactics, as are the didactic competencies and skills a teacher should attain and practice.

Nor have I ventured into assessing the influences to Nordic didactics from British and American curriculum traditions. If I would have done so, I would have had to especially recognize the early considerable impact of Ralph Tyler and the more recent one of Lawrence Stenhouse (1975), Elliot Eisner and John Goodlad (1979), and a still more recent and growing interest and awareness of the curriculum thinking of Joseph Schwab (1979,1983).

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Notes

1. It may seem a paradox that not being a teacher training institution itself, the Institute for Educational Research became the main provider of general didactics textbooks/books for courses of study in teacher education at all levels (Bjørndal & Lieberg,1978; Rørvik,1982; Gundem,1983, (1987,1991). Especially the early editions were important in establishing an understanding of the scope of didactical reflection and practice as well as a wide and comprehensive notion of the problem and research area of didactics.

2. The way the distinction between norms, forms and facts is presented, may seem unclear and not easy to grasp (cp. Blankertz 1974, p.106)

3. The model was promoted in Norway by Bjarne Bjørndal and Sigmund Lieberg (1974,1978).

4. Retningslinjer for utarbeiding av fagplaner i den videregående skolen.Rådet for videregående opplæring.Januar 1989. 1.opplag 9.1.1989 (Guidelines for the development of curricula for school subjects in upper secondary education, The National Council for Upper Secondary Education)